

The Tree Commission Meeting for the City of New Castle took place on April 4, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. in the City of New Castle's Town Hall.

Members Present: John Lloyd, Chairperson
Chip Patterson
Susan Keyser
Nancy Coning
Erv Thatcher

Members Absent: Fran Peden
Tom Truman
Toby Hagerott
Mark Miller

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Lloyd at 5:40 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Approval of Minutes – Mr. Patterson made a motion to adopt the amended February minutes. The motion was seconded and the minutes were adopted. Mr. Patterson questioned the absence of certain text from the March meeting. Discussion leaned towards the subject being discussed before/after the March meeting via email and not raised during that meeting. The recording will be reviewed by the stenographer to learn whether the subject was raised. Also in the March minutes, Mr. Lloyd asked for better clarification concerning a homeowner's statement about payment to the City for his portion of tree removal work in Van Dyke Village.

26 The Strand Planting – Ms. Keyser is concerned the planting area may be too close to the pipe. The tree selected by the homeowner since the last meeting is a hornbeam, which is a satisfactory tree. At the March meeting it was suggested the Tree Commission look at the location the homeowner has selected before any planting takes place. The consensus of Commissioners is to plant away from the pipe. Mr. Lloyd informed that the homeowner would like to plant now. (*Discussion about location of the tree followed.*)

He believes it would be better to wait until the fall to plant, primarily due to budgetary reasons. (*More discussion about the pipe in question and planting location options followed.*) The homeowner is welcome to donate towards the cost of this tree.

Budget – According to Mr. Patterson the City must fund actions of the Tree Commission. He has attending hearings and testified to this body's needs. It is not known what budget we will have. He suggested the Tree Commission should continue business as usual. The Trustees are considering a \$5,000 contribution and it is not known if the City will give the Tree Commission that money. Ms. Keyser expressed concern about generating services and being able to pay for those services. (*Lengthy discussion about funding followed, including getting an interpretation from the City Solicitor about these concerns.*) Decision making by the Tree Commission is legally binding to the City.

Tree-Tech Report – Mr. Lloyd reviewed Russ Carlson's report. At the Methodist Church he deems the trees to be structurally hazardous.

A motion was made by Ms. Keyser to accept Mr. Carlson's recommendation to remove all three (3) trees by the Methodist cemetery on Delaware Street. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Mr. Thatcher will notify the church of this decision. The church is responsible for the sidewalk.

21-E-6th Street – Mr. Carlson reports these trees are healthy but are altering the sidewalk substantially. He suggested bridging (boardwalk) the tree roots. There is limited space between the porch and trees. He suggested using the garden area in the front of the house which may interfere with the steps. The 'boardwalk' idea was not deemed appropriate. Using brick would minimize the cutting of any major roots, thereby avoiding compromising the structural integrity of the trees. Also, using brick pavers or other flexible system will reduce maintenance costs as the trees grow. *(A copy of Mr. Carlson's report will be provided to the homeowner for their response.)* The question of whether the trees are in a State right-of-way was raised. Discussion about right-of-ways and jurisdiction over trees in right-of-ways followed. Mr. Thatcher will follow up with DelDOT. This matter will be placed on the April agenda for further discussion.

Mr. Lloyd informed that Mr. Carlson has provided an invoice for \$340 representing the above two (2) reports. He recommended the invoices be sent to the City to process for payment.

Mr. Patterson made a motion to submit the invoices for processing; Ms. Keyser seconded the motion.

406 Delaware Street – Zelcova raising sidewalk – The property owner has not raised this issue directly to the Tree Commission. It involves a major root on the tree. The consensus of the group was that the homeowner should approach the Tree Commission directly.

6 W. 5th Street – Bradford Pear Trees vs. houses (2) – These trees are up against the houses and should be cut away from the houses. Mr. Lloyd will inform Mr. Samluk.

Members Report

Erv Thatcher – Nothing to report.

Susan Keyser – Expressed her concern that trees are being planted too deep along 3rd Street. She requested fellow Tree Commission members look at the trees. She reiterated her concern with mulch being placed too high up tree bark. Mr. Thatcher has not been involved with this but will talk to City personnel. *(Mr. Truman raised this issue in an email sent today.)*

Chip Patterson – Nothing to report.

Nancy Coning – Nothing to report.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie

Debbie Turner
Stenographer